



Giving Thoughts

A Thanksgiving Family Communication Project

This year, amidst challenges faced by Jewish communities, families are finding it hard to discuss emotionally charged topics. Inspired by these stories, we created a simple yet powerful family activity in collaboration with the Jewish Federation and the Jewish Agency. Our goal is to encourage open, empathetic conversations using visual tools to help families map out and share their feelings. By pairing visuals with conversations, it becomes easier for family members to express unspoken worries and approach discussions with kindness.

Purpose:

This activity promotes open family communication about complex topics, providing a visual way to express concerns. It focuses on fostering empathy and understanding without the pressure of problem-solving.

Recommended Setting:

Best done in pairs (e.g., spouses, parent and child) but can accommodate small groups (e.g., two parents and one child).

Materials Needed:

- Blank x-y axis graph (provided)
- Equal-length, different-colored paper strips (provided)
- Scissors
- Pens or markers

We hope families will use this project at their Thanksgiving gatherings, opening doors to heartfelt communication and giving each other the gift of listening and support in times of stress.

Avi Eisen and Yuval Ifrah



Giving Thoughts

A Thanksgiving Family Communication Project

Steps:

1. Choose a Topic or Setting:

Decide on a topic to explore (e.g., "Life as a Jewish student post-October 7" or "Challenges discussing Israel").

Agree to keep an open mind and focus on listening to each other's experiences and emotions

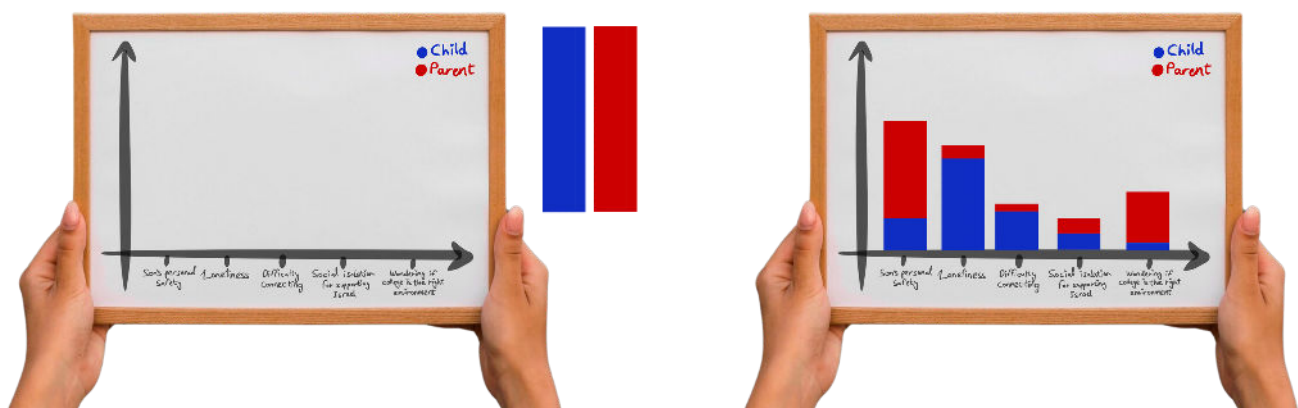
2. Identify Challenges (X-Axis):

Participants write down challenges related to the topic along the x-axis. Keep it concise. Example:

- Student: "safety," "loneliness," "academic stress"
- Parent: "worry for child's safety," "feeling disconnected"

3. Assign Concerns (Y-Axis):

Each participant selects a colored paper strip that represents their personal "bar", each participant's bar should be the same length to start with. Each participant cuts it into sections, based on how much each concern affects them, proportionally representing their worries.





Giving Thoughts

A Thanksgiving Family Communication Project

4. Share and Discuss:

Once all participants have completed their bars on the graph, each participant explains their reasoning. Example:

- “Most of my bar is for personal safety because I often feel anxious on campus.”
- “I focused on loneliness, as it’s been hard to find supportive connections.”

5. Reflect Without Problem-Solving:

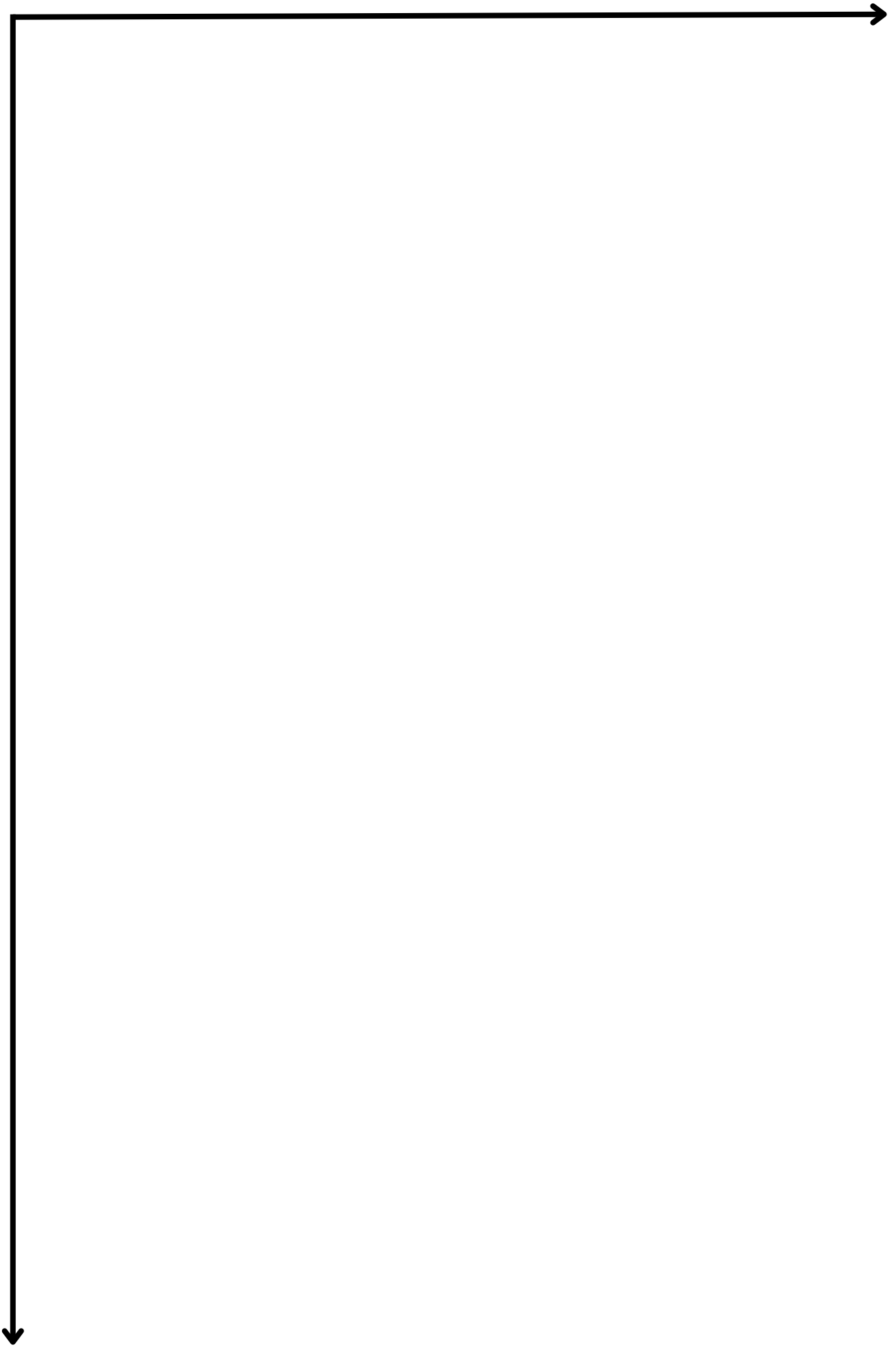
This activity is meant to foster understanding rather than immediate problem-solving. Reflect on what was shared. Use questions like:

- “What surprised you about each other’s concerns?”
- “How does this change your perspective?”

6. Wrap-Up:

Conclude by acknowledging each other’s experiences and expressing appreciation for the honesty shared.

This activity can be repeated with different topics to strengthen communication and mutual empathy in the family.



Same-length colored strips

